

UTOPIA & EUROPA SALON #2 | 14 OCTOBER 2015

CONTOUR 7, the Directorate-General for Education and Culture of the European Commission and the Representation of the European Commission in Belgium have the pleasure of welcoming you to the *Utopia & Europa Salon #2* in Hof van Busleyden, Mechelen.

"THE EUROPEAN UNION: EUTOPIA OR DYSTOPIA FOR EGALITARIANS?"

INTRODUCTION |

JIMMY JAMAR

HEAD OF THE REPRESENTATION OF THE
EUROPEAN COMMISSION IN BELGIUM

SPEAKERS |

CHIARA FUMAI
NEDKO SOLAKOV
PHILIPPE VAN PARIJS

MODERATOR |

HILDE VAN GELDER

This salon is the second in a series of three organized in the context of CONTOUR 7, a Moving Image Biennale in Mechelen curated by Nicola Setari. CONTOUR 7 is dedicated to the humanist and statesman Thomas More, who died a martyr and was the author of probably the most debated book in political theory, *Utopia*. The third and last salon will take place on the 28th of October.

The *Utopia & Europa Salons* take inspiration from the questions at the heart of More's *Utopia*. They are hosted in a specially designed structure placed in the physical proximity of the first and third edition of More's *Utopia*, which are presented in the exhibition spaces of CONTOUR 7. The central question the salon addresses is the role of artists, writers and thinkers in Europe today. How do their utopian ideas form an essential contribution to the realisation of the common good? And how do they contribute to Europe's search for a contemporary narrative?

The *Utopia & Europa Salon* is organized also in the framework of the European Commission's *New Narrative for Europe* actions with a focus on young people in countries of the European Union. *New Narrative for Europe* is an initiative that engages the cultural, scientific and artistic sectors in the ongoing discussion on the many narratives on Europe.

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JIMMY JAMAR |

Jimmy Jamar is the Head of the Representation of the European Commission in Belgium. His entire professional career has focused on communication and in particular on ways to strengthen links between the EU institutions and the European citizens. He has for example initiated a series of successful citizen dialogues between EU Commissioners and the public on important EU matters. He has also written several books on European values and Greece, his other homeland.

CHIARA FUMAI |

The performative practice of Italian artist Chiara Fumai (°1978) belongs to the tradition of female psychics, who are 'spoken by' different controversial entities, which the artist freely (mis)interprets and combines into new stories, questioning their symbolic meaning and representation in the mind of the viewer. Fumai lives and works in Milan. Dealing with radical feminism, media culture, language and repression, her light-esoteric and symbolic performances and visual art have garnered international acclaim.

NEDKO SOLAKOV |

Bulgarian artist Nedko Solakov (°1957) is one of the main protagonists of contemporary European art. His work combines a 'classical' artistic education with conceptual elements and a strong sense for the absurd. His funny and often touching visual art is the result of great fantasy and humour, which has kept him safe from the communist regime in his country of origin. Solakov's work includes paintings, drawings, installations, videos, texts and performances, in which he likes to play with diverse references to the history of art.

PHILIPPE VAN PARIJS |

Philippe Van Parijs is a professor at the University of Louvain, where he has directed the Hoover Chair of Economic and Social Ethics since its creation in 1991. He is also a Special Guest Professor at the University of Leuven and an associate member of Nuffield College, Oxford. He is one of the founders of the Basic Income Earth Network and chairs its International Board. He co-ordinates (with Paul De Grauwe) the Re-Bel initiative ("Rethinking Belgium's institutions in the European context") and (with Alex Housen and Anna Sole Mena) the Marnix Plan for a Multilingual Brussels. His recent books include *L'Allocation universelle* (Paris, 2005, with Y. Vanderborght), *Just Democracy* (Colchester, 2011), *Linguistic Justice for Europe and for the World* (Oxford, 2011; in Dutch: *Taal en rechtvaardigheid voor Europa en de wereld*, Leuven, 2015) and *After the Storm. How to save democracy in Europe* (Tielt, 2015, co-editor with L. van Middelaar).

HILDE VAN GELDER |

Hilde Van Gelder (°1969) is Associate Professor of Modern and Contemporary Art History at the University of Leuven. She directs the Lieven Gevaert Research Centre for Photography. She is editor of the Lieven Gevaert book Series, published with Leuven University Press; and of *Image [&] Narrative*, an online journal, part of Open Humanities Press. Her most recent publication is Allan Sekula *Ship of Fools / The Dockers' Museum* (2015), which she edited for Leuven University Press (E), La Criée Centre d'art contemporain, Rennes & FRAC Bretagne (FR), and MAUMAUS Lisbon (P). She is a regular curator of exhibitions: most recently, she made *Inventing the possible, Ephemeral Video Library 2* for Jeu de Paume (2014), with Marta Ponsa Salvador.